NUMB. CCCLVI.

The SPECTATOR.

——Aptiſſima quæque dabunt Dii
Charior eſt illis homo quam ſibi—— Juv.

Friday, April 18. 1712.

IT is owing to Pride, and a ſecret Affectation of a certain Self-Exiſtence, that the nobleſt Motive for Action that ever was propoſed to Man, is not acknowledged the Glory and Happineſs of their Being. The Heart is treacherous to it ſelf, and we do not let our Reflections deep enough to receive Religion as the moſt honourable Incentive to good and worthy Actions. Our natural Weakneſs to flatter our ſelves into Belief, that if we ſearch our inmoſt Thoughts, we find our ſelves wholly diſintereſted, and diveſted of any Views ariſing from Self-Love and Vainglory. But, however Spirits of ſuperficial Greatneſs may diſdain at firſt Sight to do any thing, but from a noble Impulſe in themſelves, without any other Regards in this or another Being; upon ſtricter Enquiry they will find, to act worthily, and expect to be rewarded only in another World, is as great a Pitch of Virtue as humane Nature can arrive at. If the Tenour of our Actions have any other Motive than the Deſire to be pleaſing in the Sight of the Deity, it will neceſſarily follow that we muſt be more than Men, if we are not too much exalted in Proſperity and depreſſed in Adverſity. But the Chriſtian World has a Leader, the Contemplation of whoſe Life and Sufferings muſt adminiſter Comfort in Affliction, while the Senſe of his Power and Omnipotence muſt give them Humiliation in Proſperity.

It is owing to the forbidding and unlovely Countenance with which Men of low Conceptions act what they think they conform themſelves to Religion, as well as to the more odious Conduct of Hypocrites, that the Word Chriſtian does not carry with it at firſt View all that is Great, Worthy, Friendly, Generous, and Heroick. The Man who extends his Hopes of the Reward of worthy Actions till after Death, who can beſtow unſeen, who can overlook Hatred, do Good to his Slanderer, that can never be angry at his Friend, never revengeful to his Enemy, is certainly formed for the Benefit of Society: Yet theſe are ſo far from being Chriſtian Virtues, that they are but the ordinary Duties of a Chriſtian.

When a Man with a ſteddy Faith looks back on the great Cataſtrophe of this Day, with what ſwelling Emotions of Heart muſt he contemplate the Life and Sufferings of his Deliverer? When his Agonies occur to him, how will he weep to reflect that he has often forgot them for the Glance of a Wanton, for the Applauſe of a vain World, for an Heap of fleeting paſt Pleaſures, which are preſent aking Sorrows!

How pleaſing is the Contemplation of the lowly Steps our Almighty Leader took in conducting us to his heavenly Manſions! In plain and apt Parable, Similitude and Allegory, our great Maſter enforced the Doctorine of our Salvation; but they of his Acquaintance, inſtead of receiving what they could not oppoſe, were offended at the Preſumption of being wiſer then they: They could not raiſe their little Ideas above the Conſideration of him, in thoſe Circumſtances familiar to them, or conceive that he who appeared not more Terrible or Pompous, ſhould have any thing more Exalted than themſelves; he in that Place therefore would not longer ineffectually exert a Power which was incapable of Conquering the Prepoſſeſſion of their narrow and mean Conceptions.

Multitudes follow'd him, and brought him the Dumb, the Blind, the Sick and Maim'd; whom when their Creator had Touch'd, with a ſecond Life they Saw, Spoke, Leap'd and Ran; in Affection to him, and Admiration of his Actions, the Crowd could not leave him, but waited near him till they were almoſt as faint and helpleſs as others they brought for Succour: He had Compaſſion on them, and by a Miracle ſupplyed their Neceſſities. Oh the Extatick Entertainment, when they could behold their Food immediately increaſe, in the Diſtributer's Hand, and ſee their God in Perſon, Feeding and Refreſhing his Creatures! Oh Envied Happineſs! But why do I ſay Envied, as if our good God did not ſtill preſide over our temperate Meals, chearful Hours, and innocent Converſations.

But tho' the ſacred Story is every where full of Miracles, not inferior to this, and tho' in the midſt of thoſe Acts of Divinity, he never gave the leaſt hint of a Deſign to become a Secular Prince, yet had not hitherto the Apoſtles themſelves any other than hopes of Worldly Power, Preferment, Riches and Pomp: For *Peter*, upon an Accident of Ambition among the Apoſtles, hearing his Maſter explain that his Kingdom was not of this World; was ſo ſcandaliz'd, that he, whom he had ſo long fol-

low'd

lov'd, should suffer the Ignominy, Shame and Death which he foretold, that he took him aside and said, *Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee*: For which he suffer'd a severe Reprehension from his Master, as having in his View the Glory of Man, rather than that of God.

The great Change of things began to draw near, when the Lord of Nature thought fit as a Saviour and Deliverer to make his publick Entry into *Jerusalem*, with more than the Power and Joy, but none of the Ostentation and Pomp of a Triumph: He came Humble, Meek and Lowly; with an unfelt new Extasie, Multitudes strow'd his way with Garments and Olive-branches, Crying with loud Gladness and Acclamation, *Hosannah to the Son of David, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord!* At this Great King's Accession to his Throne, Men were not Ennobled but Sav'd; Crimes were not Remitted, but Sins Forgiven; he did not bestow Medals, Honours, Favours, but Health, Joy, Sight, Speech! The first Object the Blind ever saw, was the Author of Sight, while the Lame Ran before, and the Dumb repeated the *Hosannah!* Thus Attended, he Entered into his own House, the sacred Temple, and by his Divine Authority expelled Traders and Worldlings that prophaned it; and thus did he, for a time, use a great and despotick Power, to let Unbelievers understand, that 'twas not Want of, but Superiority to all Worldly Dominion, that made him not exert it: But is this then the Saviour, is this the Deliverer? Shall this obscure *Nazarine* command *Israel*, and sit in the Throne of *David*? their proud and disdainful Hearts, which were petrifyed with Love and Pride of this World, were impregnable to the Reception of so mean a Benefactor, and were now enough exasparated with Benefits to conspire his Death: Our Lord was sensible of their Design, and prepar'd his Disciples for it, by recounting to 'em now more distinctly what should befall him; but *Peter* with an ungrounded Resolution, and in a Flush of Temper, made a sanguine Protestation, that tho' all Men were offended in him, yet would not he be offended. It was a great Article of our Saviour's Business in the World, to bring us to a Sense of our Inability, without God's Assistance, to do any thing great or good; he therefore told *Peter*, who thought so well of his Courage and Fidelity, that they would both fail him, and ev'n he should deny him Thrice that very Night.

But what Heart can conceive? what Tongue utter the Sequel? who is that yonder buffeted, mock'd and spurn'd? whom do they drag like a Felon! Whither do they carry, my Lord, my King, my Saviour, and my God? And will he Die to Expiate those very Injuries? see where they have nail'd the Lord and Giver of Life! How his Wounds blacken! his Body writhes, and Heart heaves with Pity, and with Agony! Oh Almighty Sufferer, look down, look down from thy Triumphant Infamy; lo he inclines his Head to his sacred Bosom! Hark he Groans, see he Expires! The Earth trembles, the Temple rends, the Rocks burst, the Dead arise; which are the Quick? which are the Dead? Sure Nature, all Nature is departing with her Creator.

ADVERTEISMENTS.

There being a small Number left of the LUCUBRATIONS *of* ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, *Esq*; *printed upon Royal and Medium Paper, in 4 Vol. 8vo. they are now to be sold by* J. Tonson, W. Taylor, J. Round, R. Knaplock, N. Cliff, Ra. Smith, G. Strahan, R. Parker, D. Midwinter, B. Tooke, Wyat, D. Browne, E. Sanger, H. Clements, Lloyd, C. Lillie, *and* J. Morphew.

N. B. Those who have the First and Second Volume may be furnished with the Third and Fourth to compleat their Set, by the Persons above.

The Course of Chymistry which was intended to be opened at the Laboratory of Mr. Edward Bright, Chymist, in White-Fryars, on Monday the 14th of this Instant, is, at the request of several Gentlemen that have subscribed, deferred till after the Holydays, and will begin on Monday the 28th next ensueing: Wherefore all those that are Curious in that Art and think fit to attend it, are desired forthwith to enter their Names at the Place aforesaid, and pay down 1 Guinea at the same Time, and 1 Guinea and a half at the Beginning of the Course, which are the Termes. N. B. In this Course will be discussed above 200 Operations.

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